

The Merger of Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) in to Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP) and its impact on the Constitution.

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Abstract

Ethiopia is well known by military rule (use of force) and no transition of power democratically (by the voice of peoples) made. For Ethiopia democracy is like a spontaneous and involuntary premature expulsion of non viable fetus or spontaneous abortion. The coming into power of EPRDF (mainly dominated for three decades by TPLF) was through destructive war that finally overthrows Derg; the uninterrupted bitter and peaceful struggle of young unarmed Oromo force weakened the TPLF which finally brought transitional government headed by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed. There was hope and optimism from Abiy Ahmed government, but the country back to square one, reports of mass arrest, abduction and rape mainly Oromo's by military wing especially Western (Wellega) and Southern (Borena and Guji) part of Oromia. The study is about the merger of EPRDF into EPP and its impact on the constitution. The finding of the study discloses that to cling to power and rebuild the fractured EPRDF the government led by Abiy Ahmed dissolved alliance party and formed a national party called prosperity party. The finding of the study discloses that the national party (EPP) of Abiy Ahmed undermines the sovereignty of Nations, Nationality and Peoples, it empowers the privileged urban elite (Amharan's) over the Nations, it privileges individual and undermines Nations collective bargaining competence, and further isolates, marginalizes and disempowers the periphery which all these are against the grand (Constitution) law of the country and created power vacuum in the country, mainly in Oromia region (stateless and lawless region). Abiy Ahmed pan national party nothing makes it different from the tyrant and dictator previous successive governments.

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1. Introduction

Ethiopia people's revolutionary democratic front (EPRDF) is the coalition of the various ethnic organizations found by the membership of Tigray People's Liberation front (TPLF) and Amhara National Democratic Movement (ANDM). Later, other parties joined the front namely the Oromo People's Democratic Organization (OPDO) and Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM).¹ Oromo people's democratic organization (OPDO) created by Tigray people's liberation front (TPLF) for the purpose of destroying independent Oromo organizations like Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and genuine Oromo representation.² Since 1991 the continuous dominance of TPLF largely created a monopoly of power that has excluded political competition and makes the government difficult to distinguish from the party, with the consequence that the state becomes instrument of party.³ But the fascist TPLF projects of mass massacres, mass murders, torture, incarceration, tens of millions of mass removals of Oromo from their ancestral land never saved TPLF from falling down.⁴ The dominance of TPLF failed and replaced by team Lemma Megersa from within the EPRDF because they played by the side of "Qeerroo fi Qaarree" (youth male and female) bitter historical struggle against TPLF.⁵ And Abiy Ahmed (he was one of team Lemma) from OPDO appointed as prime minister of transitional government. The transitional government led by Abiy Ahmed propagated as it is a reformist and promised for fundamental changes in governing and expanding the political space. But mass massacres, mass arrest, abduction and rape of Oromo continued especially in western (Wellega) and southern (Borena and Guji) part Oromia. Under the transitional government OPDO and ANDM changed their name to ODP (Oromo Democratic Party) and ADP (Amhara Democratic Party), but the dominant party TPLF, and SEPDEM and other satellite parties⁶ not

¹ Mohammed Hassen, Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo: A historical assessment of human rights condition in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002; North East African Studies, Volume 9, Number 3 (2002), pp 15-49.

² Leenco Lata, the Ethiopian state at the cross roads: Decolonization and Democratization or Disintegration (Lawrenceville, NJ: Red Sea Press, 1995), 59.

³ Erwin van Veen, Perpetuating power: Ethiop's political settlement and the organization of security, Clingendael Netherlands Institute of International Relations (September 2016), p 23.

⁴ Solomon Dessalegn, "Qeerroo fi Qaarree Oromoo" Unarmed young Oromo force that save Ethiopia from disintegration (International Journal of Social Science and Humanities 2019; 1 (3):33-40)

⁵ Id

⁶ Under the EPRDF government satellite parties includes Afar People's Democratic Organization, Beni Shangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Party, Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party, Gambella People's Democratic

changed their political name. Finally ODP, ADP, SEPDEM that make up Ethiopia's ruling coalition, and the other satellite party except TPLF voted to merge into a single national party, called Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP). Based on the points addressed above this paper mainly addresses the merger of EPRDF into National Prosperity Party (EPP) and its impact on the constitution. The writer aims to address the merger of Ethiopia people's revolutionary democratic front (EPRDF) into Ethiopia prosperity party (EPP) and its impact on the constitution because in the political history of Ethiopia only small number of politicians from single political party representing the least number of populations from the entire populations becomes dominant by which the other party lost legitimate representation and become instrument of the dominant party. In such case the monopoly of power by dominant party exclude political competition as a result of this it is difficult to distinguish government from party with the consequence that state becomes the instrument of single dominant party which was/is a chronic problem and unsolved in Ethiopia.

2. Methods and Materials

This paper mainly addresses the constitutional impact of EPRDF merger into National Prosperity Party. To address the issues analytical qualitative research design used. Both primary and secondary source of data were used to have strong based evidence. The primary sources of data are interview with selected prominent/figure politicians from both governing and opposition party, activists, academicians. In addition, documents, news and features from private and government legible websites were used as secondary source of data.

3. The EPRDF Government

Since 1991 Ethiopian state was continuously dominated by TPLF within the EPRDF government and the other involved parties in the ruling coalition lost their status as legitimate representatives of the ethnic groups they normally represent. Oromo dissenters, for instance widely perceive their EPRDF representatives (OPDO/ODP/OPP) as government "puppets" handpicked by the TPLF. TPLF was at the core of power and dominating the EPRDF coalition, followed by a second ring, composed of ANDM, OPDO and SEPDM, which act as more junior partners of the

Movement and Hareri National League to enhance ethnic representation and government authority, but to enjoy a decreasing measure of status, representation and influence in how Ethiopia is ruled.

EPRDF,⁷ and a third ring made up of EPRDF satellite parties, such as Afar People's Democratic Organization and Beni Shangul- Gumuz People's Democratic Party. The second and third rings are said to enhance ethnic representation and government authority, but to enjoy a decreasing measure of status, representation and influence in how Ethiopia is ruled.⁸ Opposing political party exists, but remains powerless.⁹ Opposition leaders have been subjected to abuse and their parties prevented from operating as such through an array of restricting laws and regulations.¹⁰ For example; regular reports of threats to, and detention and prosecution of opposition party leaders and members, activists, bloggers, journalists, and academics, often without charge.¹¹ The EPRDF government used like anti terrorism laws, passed to assist the western based war against terror to criminalize and prosecute any expression of dissent, particularly in Oromia, which had active insurgency movements. The lack of genuine central representation of all ethnic groups and the dominance of the TPLF led EPRDF government within the security sector, local government, and legislative politics means that avenues for political opposition or dissent are practically nonexistent.¹²

TPLF led EPRDF government maintaining of tight control over the regions and the localities eliminates the possibility of regional representatives enacting their constitutional rights of autonomy or secession. The Oromo nation which is the largest nation of the country support ethnic federalism, but inspires to greater autonomy, and resent government intrusion in regional affairs. This clearly shows as TPLF has sought to play a leading role in defining the country's political trajectory. TPLF chairman Meles Zenawi control of government representatives tightened after the war with Eritrea (1998-2000) leading to concentration of political power in an increasingly smaller number of politicians close to him.¹³ Especially to realize their dominance Meles Zenawi declared war to eradicate Oromo population.¹⁴ It was under the guise of development that the apartheid racist regime of Meles Zenawi began to speed up the process of

⁷Vaughan and Tronvoll (2002), op.cit.; ICG (2009), op.cit. The ANDM, OPDO and SEPDF were partially created by the TPLF through the recruitment of prisoners of war from Amhara, Oromia and South Ethiopia and by making them the nucleus of party cadres that were sent back to their home areas and coached by the TPLF.

⁸ Markakis, J., Ethiopia: The last two frontiers, Woodbridge, James Currey, 2011.

⁹ Id

¹⁰ Abbink, J. and T. Hagmann (eds.), Reconfiguring Ethiopia: The politics of authoritarian reform, London, Routledge, 2013.

¹¹ Id

¹² Id

¹³Mohammed Hassen, Conquest, Tyranny, and Ethnocide against the Oromo: A historical assessment of human rights condition in Ethiopia, ca. 1880s-2002; North East African Studies, Volume 9, Number 3 (2002)

¹⁴ Id

extermination and ethnic cleansing that was designed to exterminate Oromo's and takes full control of Oromo's land.¹⁵ When Meles Zenawi declared to eradicate the Oromo nation from their mother land, Oromia, the fascist tyrant not only planned to reduce the Oromo population in number and Oromia in size but to destroy the people and the nation once and for all. And to achieve his project Meles Zenawi used traitorous Oromo's through Oromo Peoples Democratic Organization (OPDO).

But the dynamics of co-operation and dominance have become less TPLF- directed and more competitive within the EPRDF that is, since the death of Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2012, with the result that TPLF's historically mentored satellite parties are developing a more assertive stance of their own.¹⁶ Following the bitter struggle led mainly by Oromo youth male and female, division in the EPRDF accelerated. An alliance between the OPDO and ANDM left the dominant TPLF for three decades off guard.¹⁷ By which different viewpoints began to surface on how to handle the Oromo youth male and female bitter protest, as OPDO and ANDM sympathized with the Oromo youth male and female protesters.¹⁸ The sudden appearance of the OPDO as the leading organization in the EPRDF added to the anti-TPLF rhetoric within the coalition. Following the 2018 political change, the TPLF started seeing the EPRDF (mainly alliance party OPDO and ANDM) in almost the same way opposition parties had viewed the EPRDF.¹⁹ Finally the dominance of TPLF failed and transitional government was established under the leadership of OPDO mainly through team Lemma Megersa (the former president of Oromia regional state) because they played seriously by the side Oromo youth male and female protesters against the dominant and dictator TPLF.²⁰ And Abiy Ahmed appointed as prime minister of transitional government from OPDO by which he presented himself as a reformist and promised fundamental changes in governing and expanding political space.

4. The Rational of EPRDF Merger into EPP

¹⁵ Id

¹⁶ Id n(3), p 24

¹⁷ Semir Yusuf, Drivers of ethnic conflict in contemporary Ethiopia, by Institute for Security Studies (December 2019), p 26

¹⁸ Id

¹⁹ Id, p 26

²⁰ Id

This part addresses the rationality of Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) merger into Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP). And the primary sources are writings and interview with prominent politicians, activist and academicians. Also analysis of different documents used to discuss the rational.

The bitter and uninterrupted struggle of 'Qeerroo and Qaarree' Oromo (Oromo youth male and female) brought the contemporary political transition in Ethiopia. The power of 'Qeerroo and Qaarree' (Oromo youth male and female) that shook the country political economy was an immediate cause for the foundation of transitional government. At the time of Abiy Ahmed appointment a lot has happened which brought hope and optimism to millions of people living in the Ethiopian empire. It was only for few months that hope and optimism filled the air of the country especially Oromo region who suffered a lot by successive system that mainly comes from the northern part of the country for centuries. The country back to square one, reports of arrest, abduction and rape of Oromo by the country military wing especially the western (Wellega) and southern (Borena and Guji) part of Oromia. It counts for more than two years the western (Wellega) and southern (Borena and Guji) part of Oromia failed under the unconstitutional command post under Abiy Ahmed government. This clearly shows as transitional government led by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is not reformist but a dictator talking simply reform to buy time to get a good grip on power. Abiy Ahmed government completely failed to live its promise of reform and change of laws and institutions owned for long time by tyrant TPLF led EPRDF government. Instead the government led by Abiy Ahmed turned to be the second tyrant TPLF. Abiy Ahmed government ignored people's opportunities that have been through a lot of trauma for generation instead he gave priority for his political party survival and continuity. In addition OPDO/ODP leaders are doing for the survival of their party and positions. Because they are using their political capital to sustain themselves than finding peaceful way to move forward, make peace and implement the agreement with opposition political organizations like Oromo Liberation Front (OLF). The move for Medemer and Merger of alliance party to Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP) mainly led by Abiy Ahmed clearly indicates as they are deceptively working hard to cling to power. Abiy Ahmed to rebuild the EPRDF fractured image, to redeem its tarnished reputation, to resolve the EPRDF's crisis of legitimacy and address its crippling dysfunction went for the nuclear option of dissolving the four constituent units of the coalition and forming a single pan-Ethiopian national party called Ethiopia prosperity party

(EPP). Prime Minister Abiy's Ahmed moves to expand and unify the ruling EPRDF coalition into EPP, motivated by his desire to centralize power and decision making, and display and strength the authoritarian mode of governance. According to Jetu Idosa, an assistant professor of law at Addis Ababa (Finfinnee) University:

The merger of EPRDF into EPP unveiled corporate political shield of regional party so easy for the rivalries to pierce in their individual capacity once they found that it is inescapable from the black hole they get into. Regional party will be alone in the black hole because it is not in the interest of their political constituency which critically needs strong political institution than collections of strong persons at this historical juncture. Your political shareholders will now opt for new political corporate as already reduces yourself into a sole political proprietary... above all, in such black hole scenario, regional party not in a position to stand for the national interest of the political community whom they represent because of the nature of the black hole.²¹

The upshot would be that organs at the central level would exercise greater power than is currently the case within the EPRDF, in which regional parties until now have been powerful independent entities.²² The merger of EPRDF into EPP emboldens the supremacist and bigots at the center who were advantageous of the past system.²³ But the merger of EPRDF into EPP cannot answer the issue of equitable representation of nation at the central level in each sector.²⁴ The merger of EPRDF into EPP arguably represents a step away from formal ethnic power sharing.²⁵ The proposed reforms open the new party's regional branches to individuals from all ethnicities and mean that its central committee will not be formally composed of ethno-regional blocs.²⁶ The merger of EPRDF into EPP means inching away from ethnic federalism toward a system based on territory but not identity which is still issue of nations not answered. The prosperity party is not going to be the direct representative of any particular ethnic group. Instead, it will try to be an all encompassing national party that speaks for the entire Ethiopian

²¹ Jetu Idosa (December 2019). Discussion on the current political issues, Retrieved from <https://oromiamedia.com>

²² Interview with senior politicians from opposition party, Addis Ababa (Finfinnee), December 2019

²³ Jawar Mohammed (December 2019). Interview on the current political issues, Retrieved from <https://oromiamedia.com>

²⁴ Id

²⁵ Interview with senior OPDO/ODP official, Addis Ababa (Finfinnee) December 2019

²⁶ Id

people. The following are some of the constitutional crisis the national prosperity party creates if it is pushed further.

4.1 Against the Sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia

What are the Ethiopian people composed of? I stress on the word peoples because sociologically speaking at this stage Ethiopia is not really one nation. It is made up of a dozen of nationalities with their own language, ways of dressing, history, social organization and territorial entity. And what else is a nation? It is not made of a people with a particular tongue, particular ways of dressing, particular history, and particular social and economic organization? Then may I conclude that in Ethiopia there is the Oromo nation, Tigray nation, Amhara nation, Sidama nation, Wolaita nation, Adero nation and others. This is the true picture of Ethiopia.²⁷

In Ethiopia oppression of nationalities was/is at the heart of the crisis. Nationalities rights to self determination up to and including secession as decisive remedy for the resolution of Ethiopia's long standing problem of the national question and with that in view, as a main architect of the transition and the 1995 constitution, stipulated a distinct clause that placed sovereignty on nationalities, nations and people, and consequently reorganized the constituent states in a manner that ensures self rule to at least the major nationalities and even permit them to secede after going through some procedures.²⁸

The federal system that started de facto since 1991 and de jure following the adoption of the 1995 constitution attempts to end the cycle of political crisis by decentralizing power and resource to nine constituent states and two autonomous cities and by ensuring self rule to ethno-linguistic groups at various levels.²⁹ That means the post 1991 Ethiopian experiment seen as exception. With a view to addressing the age old cause of state crisis, the federal system intends to decentralize power and resource, and resolve the "nationalities question" by accommodating

²⁷ Walleign Mekonnen, On the question of nationalities in Ethiopia (17 November 1969)

²⁸ See Articles 8, 39, 46 and 47 of the FDRE Constitution proclamation No 1/1995

²⁹ Maimire Mennasemay, "Federalism, Ethnicity and the Transition to Democracy," Horn of Africa, Special Issue on Federation in the Horn v. XXI (2003) pp. 88-115; Alemante G. Selassie, "Ethnic federalism: Its Promise and Pitfalls," 28 Yale Journal of International Law 51 (2003) pp. 51-107.

the country's various ethno-linguistic groups. Among other things, the FDRE constitution states that the federal governments and regional states shall have the legislative, executive and judicial powers.³⁰ But the new national party (EPP), its architects failed to take into account a range of constitutional, ideological and representational issue that could bring the political legitimacy and representative capacity of the new formed party into question.³¹

Ethiopia adopted a multinational federal order in 1994 because there were politically salient ethnic cleavages that have received eloquent theoretical and political endorsements, particularly since 1960s. Ethnic identity and ethnic nationalism come to be the predominant mode of political mobilization and organizing not just because EPRDF government chooses such an arrangement but rather because of the asymmetric relationship of inequality and domination among the ethnic groups in the country.³² The formation of prosperity party comes at the time when these ethnic cleavages are pronounced and the central demands of Ethiopia's ethnic groups for political autonomy and cultural justice remain unresolved.³³ Among political forces that support Abiy Ahmed prosperity party are "Ethiopia nationalist or Unitarist" a fast diminishing political bloc that views the EPRDF and the ethno-national federal order grants bigger ethnic groups self-governance rights within their respective states, as source of troubles.³⁴ In the above case "Ethiopia nationalist or Unitarist" mean "fake nationalist" and for them to be genuine Ethiopian national one has to speak Amharic, to listen to Amharic music, to accept the Amhara-Tigray religion, orthodox Christianity and to wear Amhara-Tigray shamma in international conferences.³⁵

These fake nationalist supports fully Abiy Ahmed prosperity party that disregards genuine national state.³⁶ The merger of distinct entities that represented the various ethnic groups marks a return to Ethiopia's centralizing and homogenizing past. According to draft bylaw of the

³⁰ See Article 50 (2) of the FDRE constitution proclamation No1/1995

³¹ Awol K. Allo (5 December 2019). The new Pan-Ethiopian party created to replace the EPRDF coalition risks bringing the country to the edge of abyss. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com>

³² Id n(19)

³³ Id n(23)

³⁴ Id n(23)

³⁵ Id n(19)

³⁶ Genuine national state is a state in which all nationalities participate equally in a state affairs, it is a state where every nationality given equal opportunity to preserve and develop its language, its music and its history. It is a state where Oromo, Amhara, Tigray, Adere (Harari), Hadiya, Kembata, Sidama, Wolaita, Kaffa, Somali, Gurages, etc. are treated equally. It is a state where no nation dominates another nation be it economically or culturally.

proposed prosperity party, members of prosperity party are individuals representing themselves. This departs from EPRDF's representation of parties within ethno national constituencies. By privileging individual representation, it undermines the representation of nations (which, in Ethiopia, constitutionally recognized³⁷ to be pillar constituents with pre political sovereignty). Ethiopian prosperity party ignores or deliberately undermines this foundational sovereignty and deprives these nations of their right to organize based on their collective identity. This in turn weakness their capacity for collective mobilization and cripples their ability to collectively bargain for autonomous self rule vis-à-vis the center. It disempowers them and denies them the opportunity to collectively bargain for a fair share of resources, economic benefits, and political power.

4.2 Against Multinational Federation

The transitional charter has completely changed the structure of the state from unitary to federal structure.³⁸ The transitional charter guaranteed each nation, nationality and peoples the right to administer its own affairs within its defined territory and effectively participate in the central government on the basis of freedom, fair and proper representation.³⁹

Following the transition the FDRE constitution gives importance to ethno-linguistic composition of the state. From the text of the constitution, the right of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples seems to occupy a central place. For example, the opening words of the preamble read 'We, the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of Ethiopia...' The preamble identifies the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia as the author of the constitution. In addition, the provisions of the constitution dealing with the rights of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia are made difficult to amend and even during a state of emergency these rights may not be suspended,⁴⁰ although many rights can be. Peoples believe that, the fusion of distinct entities that represented the various ethnic groups marks a return to Ethiopia's centralizing and homogenizing past.⁴¹ Indeed, many Ethiopians living outside the capital, Addis Ababa (Finfinnee), have strong attachment to their ethnic communities and believe that ethnic groups should be entitled to

³⁷See Article 8 & 39 of FDRE Constitution proclamation No 1/1995

³⁸ Ethiopia transitional period charter No 1/1991

³⁹ See Article 2 of Ethiopia transitional period charter No 1/1991

⁴⁰ See Article 93(4) (c) of FDRE constitution proclamation No 1/1995

⁴¹ Id n(23)

determine their political, economic and cultural status without any external interference, including the right to be judged and be educated in their own language.⁴² They want to belong to the larger Ethiopian polity while also preserving their unique identity and character.⁴³ For them, the prosperity party threatens to undermine the achievements of the last three decades in terms of political autonomy and lays the structural foundation for a unitary that will rob them of their dignity and autonomy.

The ex-president of Oromia regional state Lemma Megersa who was a key figure in a group of EPRDF reformers known as team Lemma, hastening the TPLF dominance exit, declare his opposition to the merger contending the time is not right for merger.⁴⁴ According to Jawar Mohammed, Oromo political activist who dislike the merger; sooner or later the merger will start to erode the federal system. The group won't be able to collectively bargain. It is too early to dismantle ethnic based national organization.⁴⁵ They point to the fact that ethnic nationalism is still the dominant mode of political mobilization in Ethiopia and argue that merging the party before addressing the central political demands of the historically marginalized ethnic groups and before completing the democratic transition risks bringing the country to the edge of an abyss.⁴⁶

TPLF leaders who support ethnic federalism and view the merger as first step toward dismantling it reject it outright, believing that it signals the ends of multinational order. They believe that ethnic federalism protects Ethiopia from its own history of coercive centralism and cultural homogenization. Undoing it, they say, would set the stage for a return to rule by an abusive center or even worse.⁴⁷

The Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has asserted that the merger will not affect ethnic federalism, but to many opponents, the plan to strengthen the central party at the expense of its regional blocs suggests the opposite.⁴⁸ Because the EPRDF and the federal structure come into being together in the early 1990s, the two are intertwined and widely associated to one another. Opponents also perceives Abiy's doctrine of Medemer, or synergy, about which he has recently

⁴² Id

⁴³ Id

⁴⁴ Lemma Megersa dismisses Medemer and Prosperity Party, Addis Standard, 29 November, 2019.

⁴⁵ Jawar Mohammed (December 2019). Interview on the current political issues, Retrieved from <https://oromiamedia.com>

⁴⁶ Id n (44 & 45)

⁴⁷ TPLF leaders rejected Medemer, Abiy Ahmed Prosperity Part, Addis Standard, and (December 2019).

⁴⁸ Interview with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, Sheger Radio, September 14, 2019.

published a book and which will inform the new party's program, as signaling his intention to remove ethnic based federalism.⁴⁹ For communities whose long standing demands for genuine representation, cultural and linguistic equality is yet to be met, the prosperity party, as a vanguard part that is likely to dominate Ethiopian politics in the years to come, represents a considerable threat.⁵⁰ The other crisis of prosperity party is that once the current structure is dismantled and ethnic groups lose direct representation within the new national party, their ability to advocate for their specific groups will be diminished, and they could lack influence over policy decisions that might undermines the federal structure.

4.3 *Undermines Nations' Collective Bargaining Competence*

According to bylaw, members join the Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP) as individuals, not as delegates representing their nations as it is the case in normal coalition (such as EPRDF). The new national party of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed is similar to the view of instrumentalist and nation builders that fail to realizes emperical evidence from multi cultural societies *hints that identity doesn't necessarily vanish from the face of political discourse even if political and economic situations are favorably accommodative, let alone when it is a state target of destruction*⁵¹ *under the guise of nation building*. The nation builders and instrumentalist fail to consider the identity factor as cause of tension in multi cultural societies.⁵² The same is true of Abiy Ahmed Prosperity Party because it ignored the country long time struggle led by Ethiopian student since 1960 against the oppressive regime which one of its cause was the issue of identity. And the central premise of Ethiopia student movement was that the country constituted a "prison of nationalities".⁵³ Abiy Ahmed Prosperity Party re-born "one oppressor nation" whose political system, culture and language dominated the others and on the other, many 'oppressed nationalities' that were politically and economically marginalized, culturally and linguistically dominated. The Showa (Amhara) identified as 'oppressor nation' and the rest the 'oppressed

⁴⁹ Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed launches his book "Medemer", Addis Standard, October 20, 2019. One million copies of the book were reprinted in Afaan Oromoo and Amharic.

⁵⁰ Id n(23)

⁵¹ This reminds us of the prominent Article by Walker Connor, "Nation Building or Nation Destroying?" world politics 24:3 (1972) pp 319-355 where he argued that modernization, industrialization etc. do not necessarily minimize ethnic loyalty and nation building is nation destroying in diverse societies.

⁵² Id

⁵³ John Young, Peasant Revolution in Ethiopia: The Tigray People's Liberation Front 1975-1991 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

nationalities'.⁵⁴ Or Abiy Ahmed Prosperity Party takes away Nations, Nationalities and Peoples political power and re-establishes dominance of Amharic speaking elite by stealth. This is because, according to Ethiopia prosperity party by law, anyone could be a member of the regional chapters. This means Amharic speakers whose numbers are larger in Oromia can be a member of this party not representing the Oromo nation. By implication, the previously dominating groups (Amharan) inhabiting the urban centers in the regions will populate the party membership and eventually dominate the region, particularly in the urban centers where demography favors them owing to historical reasons. This intensifies the urban-rural divide, tipping the balance to the former in the land where the latter are the majority. Even worse, it diminishes and in time, eliminates the constitutional right of nations in the constituency to a "full measure of self governance".⁵⁵ Consequently, even if a Somali or a Gumuz person could join Ethiopia prosperity party executive committee, he/she has a bargaining power of once person not delegated power of his/her nation. As a non-delegated, atomized, individual person, such members lack the legitimacy and force to exert effective bargaining on behalf of his/her nation. The net effect of this scheme is therefore to disorganize or disempowers the collectivity by privileging the individual.

Relevant to this there is false narrative out there that Amharan's are for individual rights, while Oromo's are for collective rights. Nothing could be further from the truth. As we know, Oromo's have reputation as peace loving, free spirited, generous, human rights respecting and tree hugging land. Moreover they were famous for their horsemanship and bravery as a result have long benefited from what psychologist call the "halo effect". Alexander Bulatovich (who accompanied the armies of Menelik during conquest), made the following observations:

"The main character trait of the Oromo is love for complete independence and freedom. Having settled on any piece of land, having built himself a hut, the Oromo does not want to acknowledge the authority of any one, except his personal will. Their former governmental system was the embodiment of his basic trait of their character- a great number of small independent states with figure head kings or with republican form of government. The dreadful annihilation of more than half of the population during the

⁵⁴ Merera Gudina, Ethiopia: Competing Ethnic Nationalism and the Quest for Democracy, 1960-2000 (Shaker Publishing: PhD thesis, 2003).

⁵⁵ See article 39(3) of FDRE constitution proclamation No 1/1995

conquest took away from the Oromo the possibility of thinking about any sort of uprising. And the freedom loving Oromo's who didn't recognize any authority other than the speed of his horse, the strength of his hand and the accuracy of his spear, now goes through the hard school of obedience.”

In sharp contrast to Oromo's, Habashas were subjected to a double whammy in terms of oppressive feudal culture ruled by tyrannically and barbaric kings on one hand and domineering Ethiopia Orthodox Church on other. So where does the moral authority to lecture Oromo about individual rights associated with liberal philosophy come from? Although it has never part of their socio cultural and political ethos, Habashas see the virtue of individual rights as a winning formula for the Nafxagna/settlers class to fight any social, political and economic measures that nation such as Oromo, Sidama, etc. could impose in their respective states. So Oromo's and other nations must understand that their collective rights cannot be fully recognized without the existence of legitimate Oromo centered institutions designed to further protect and develop Oromo cultural characteristics. This can only happen in genuine federal arrangement or in an independent Oromia.

4.4 The Ethiopia Prosperity Party (EPP) Centralize Power

In the words of Dicey “federalism is a political invention which is intended to reconcile national unity and power, with the maintenance of the rights of the separate member state”.⁵⁶ Jega perceived federalism as being “essentially about the distribution of political and economic decision making power among constituent units or level of governments”.⁵⁷ According to Appadorai “a federal state is the one in which there is a central authority that represents the whole and acts on behalf of the whole in external affairs and on such internal affairs as are held to be of common interest and in which there are provincial or state authorities with the powers of legislation and administration within the sphere allotted to them by the constitution.”⁵⁸ Since 1960 the central premise of Ethiopia student movement was identity factor because Ethiopia is made up of diverse ethnic groups, religions, customs, traditions, and languages. Because these diversities were problem to the oppressor/unitary system, Ethiopia after half century struggle

⁵⁶ In Elaigwu JI, Akindele RA. Foundation of Nigerian federalism: 1960-1995 (eds.) Vol 3.

⁵⁷ Jega AM. “The political economy of Nigerian federalism” p 38

⁵⁸ Appadorai A. The substance of politics. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974.

opted for federalism to retain as much as possible nation's identity beginning from the transitional period. That means the 1991 and 1995 transitional charter and the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution respectively gives importance to ethno-linguistic composition of the state. The Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of the country identified as the author of the FDRE constitution.⁵⁹ Every Nations, Nationalities and Peoples in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self governance which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in the state and federal governments.⁶⁰ Based on this the constitution recognized and incorporated nine member states with self rule exclusively on state matters.⁶¹ This means there is no way for the federal government to interfere to state matters except expressly provided by the FDRE constitution. But when we come to the new national prosperity party of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed it completely diminishes self autonomy of regional states and demise their independent organs of the government. According to the bylaw, the head of the regional chapters of prosperity party are appointed directly by the prosperity party central committee and this clearly indicates centralization of power and homogenizing the Ethiopian state. This means that, for instance, a chair person of Oromia, Somali, Afar, Tigray, Sidama, etc chapters appointed by the central committee of Ethiopia prosperity party. Thus, powers come from the central top to the regional bottom, not from bottom up as envisioned in the current federal arrangement. Needless to say, such centralization appointment erodes party autonomy and, eventually regional government's autonomy. These days there is an administration and power vacuum especially at the regional level, for instance, Oromia has no effective president and other sector of the government like the police and security are not properly functioning and protecting citizens in the region.

As a result of this, previous two-three months hundreds of Oromo youngsters, aged, women's were killed by organized group called "Satanaw"⁶² (an Amharic word) who songs one Ethiopia (fake nationalist).

⁵⁹ See Article 8 of FDRE constitution of proclamation No 1/1995

⁶⁰ See Article 39(3) of FDRE constitution of proclamation No 1/1995

⁶¹ See Article 47 & 52 of FDRE constitution of proclamation No 1/1995

⁶² 'Satanaw' is an Amharic word who songs one Ethiopia only (the fake nationalist). The member of this group called 'Satanaw' they are mainly from Amharan's and its financial sources are richest and elite Amharan's. The base of this illegally organized group is Oromia region especially big towns or cities were Amharan's dominated like Adama, Bishoftu, Dire Dawa, Finfinne (Addis Ababa), etc striving heinously to re-establish the dominance of

4.5 It Further Isolates, Marginalizes, and Disempowers the Periphery

The Ethiopian prosperity party further isolates and disempowers the members and constituents of “Affiliate parties” of the Ethiopian periphery, namely Afar People’s Democratic Organization, Beni Shangul-Gumuz People’s Democratic Party, Ethiopian Somali People’s Democratic Party, Gambella People’s Democratic Movement and Hareri National League. The “Affiliate parties” are called to be the third ring established to represent their respective ethnicity and rule it as independent body. But enjoy a decreasing measure of status, representation and influence in how Ethiopia is ruled. This means their respective ethnicities were not fairly and equitable represented at the center (federal government) which violates the important provision of the country constitution.⁶³ It is true that under the old EPRDF system, the affiliate parties were denied a seat (EPRDF) at the center. Under the new national party they may access a seat but not in their representative (their respective ethnicity) capacity instead representing himself or herself. Now although the Ethiopia prosperity party is making it look like they are being given a seat, they actually are not. No Somali or Afar party is given seat at the center. It is rather an individual Somali or Afar who has no delegated power of their respective ethnicity through their region that individually goes in and out of the meeting hall where he/she is given a seat. He/she may have a seat but not a voice nor a hearing. Above all, he/she has no national constituency. Generally for all these affiliated parties the new national party brings them nothing for their respective ethnicity. In actual fact, it makes them lose what already they have. Because the new national party which is the only ideas or whim of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed completely snatches or demise their regional autonomy or self governance guaranteed by the country constitution⁶⁴ while not making any real gain in bargaining power.

5. Conclusion

The appointment of Abiy Ahmed as Prime Minister of transitional government brought hope and optimism for millions of living in the Ethiopian empire. But it was only for short time the country filled with hope and optimism, and the country back to square one, reports of mass

Amharan’s elites and the richest targeting Oromo’s, Oromo’s businesses or their properties found in the above mentioned towns or cities.

⁶³ See Article 39(3) of FDER constitution of proclamation No 1/1995

⁶⁴ See Article 8, 39, 46, 47 & 50 of FDRE constitution of proclamation No 1/1995

arrest, abduction and rape mainly Oromo's by military wing especially Western (Wellega) and Southern (Borena and Guji) part of Oromia. Surprisingly the Western (Wellega) and Southern (Borena and Guji) part of Oromia fall under unconstitutional command post lasted for more than two years. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed gave priority for his political party survival and continuity. To cling to power Abiy Ahmed dissolved alliance party and formed a national party called prosperity party. The pan national party of Abiy Ahmed completely centralizes power and decision making, and display and strength the authoritarian mode of governance. The pan national party of Abiy Ahmed emboldens the supremacist and bigots (the Amharan's) at the central government who were advantageous of the past unitary system. It is a step away from ethnic based power sharing, it undermines the sovereignty of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, and it empowers the privileged urban elite (Amharan's) over the Nation, undermines Nations collective bargaining competence and privilege individuals, and further isolates, marginalizes and disempowers the periphery. So Abiy Ahmed national party nothing makes it different from the TPLF led EPRDF government. What makes them different is EPRDF government was dominated by party (TPLF), but the pan national party dominance is led by an individual (which is Abiy Ahmed). Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed used slogan of national unity or unitary type of government system to convince the public at large. And it's ultimate to be authoritarian type of government. Based on these points addressed above it is possible to conclude that Prime minister Abiy Ahmed pan national party cannot sustain long time, even cannot win the 2020 (G.C.) national election (if democratic election will be held) because his party has no strong social base, economic base and security base.

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Abbreviations

ADP: Amhara Democratic Party

ANDM: Amhara National Democratic Movement

EPRDF: Ethiopia People's Revolutionary Democratic Front

EPP: Ethiopia Prosperity Party

ODP: Oromo Democratic Party

OLF: Oromo Liberation Front

OPP: Oromo Prosperity Party

OPDO: Oromo people's democratic organization

SEPDm: Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement

TPLF: Tigray People's Liberation front

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